Veteran Advocate Newsletter

September 2026

This Newsletter is published monthly as a Service and Reference for all Veterans, Veteran Family Members, and friends of Veterans. Each month multiple Veteran Military Organization sites (and other sources, as applicable) are queried for timely, relevant, and viable Veteran issues… issues that regardless of source, impact all Veterans.

Nothing is provided in this newsletter that cannot be retrieved by the reader – all sources are cited. Information, articles and/or article excerpts provided are simply provided for ease of access and/or reference.

A few years ago, I started sending links and information on the below listed subjects. This information is typically well received; I am often asked to send it more than once throughout the year. That said, I recommend saving this newsletter as a reference tool.

Subject 1: How to access VA records and documents online.
Subject 2: The National Personnel Records Center, Military Personnel Records (NPC-MPR).

**In addition, I have also attached information on how to access/contact the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). The NARA preserves U.S. government records.*

As I always do, I Highly Recommend using a Certified/Professional Veteran Service Officer to assist you with any questions you have regarding these issues and benefits earned by your Service.

Point of Contact information on recommended area Certified/Professional Service Officer Assistance follow:

- Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs Phone (IDVA) Phone: (815) 633-8266
- Veterans Assistance Commission of Winnebago County (VACWC), Phone: (815) 516-2850, Email: vac@wincoil.us

Very Respectfully, David

David R. Draeger
Colonel of Military Police
Regular Army, Retired
B.S. & M.A. WIU; M.S.S. U.S. Army War College
Police Training Institute, UIUC
President, Veteran Leadership Team (501c3) – Service Officer, American Legion Post 332 – Benefit Officer, VFW District 6, Dept. of IL. – Chaplain, VFW Post 2955

VA Records

Source: https://www.va.gov/records/

Access your VA records and documents online to more easily manage your benefits.

Get your records and documents

- **Download your VA benefit letters**

  Download letters like your eligibility or award letter for certain benefits.

- **View your VA payment history**

  Check the status of your VA disability, pension, and education benefits payments. You can also see payments for certain survivor benefits.

- **Request your military records (DD214)**

  View and print documents from your official military personnel file (including your DD214).

- **Get Veteran ID cards**

  Find out how to get different types of identification cards to show your military status or your enrollment in VA health care.

- **Get your VA medical records (called VA Blue Button)**

  Set up your personal health record and download medical records, reports, and images to share with your VA and non-VA doctors.

- **Learn how to apply for a discharge upgrade**

  Answer a series of questions to get step-by-step instructions on how to apply for a discharge upgrade or correction. If your discharge gets upgraded, you'll be eligible for the VA benefits you earned during your period of service.

- **How to request a VA home loan Certificate of Eligibility (COE)**

  Get instructions for how to request your Certificate of Eligibility (COE), which confirms for your lender that you qualify for a VA-backed home loan. Then you can choose your loan type to learn about the rest of the loan application process.

- **Change your address**

  Find out how to change your address and other contact information in your VA.gov profile.

- **Search historical military records (National Archives)**

  Visit the National Archives website to research military records from the Revolutionary War to the present.

  Last updated: April 26, 2024

The National Personnel Records Center, Military Personnel Records (NPRC-MPR)

Source: https://www.archives.gov/personnel-records-center/military-personnel

The National Personnel Records Center, Military Personnel Records (NPRC-MPR) is the repository of millions of military personnel, health, and medical records of discharged and deceased veterans of all services during the 20th century. (Records prior to WWI are in Washington, DC.) NPRC (MPR) also stores medical treatment records of retirees from all services and records for dependents and other persons treated at naval medical facilities. Information from the records is made available upon written request (with signature and date) to the extent allowed by law.

This site provides information regarding military personnel, health, and medical records stored at NPRC (MPR).

If you are a veteran or next-of-kin of a **deceased** veteran, you may now use vetrecs.archives.gov to order a copy of your military records. For all others, your request is best made using a Standard Form 180. It includes complete instructions for preparing and submitting requests.
Please Note: All requests **must** be in writing, signed, and **mailed** to us at the address shown below.

Address

National Personnel Records Center

1 Archives Drive
St. Louis, Missouri 63138

Hours

Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
(Closed weekends and Federal holidays)

Contact Information

Telephone: 314-801-0800
Status Check: Online Status Update Request Form *
Fax: 314-801-9195

Checking the Status of Your Request:

Allow about 10 days for us to receive and initiate processing your request, then you may check the status of your request by using the Online Status Update Request form. ***Please Note:*** These forms are ONLY for status updates for EXISTING requests from the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC). Visit the Request Military Service Records page to start a new request for military service records; online, by mail, or by fax.

You may also telephone the **NPRC Customer Service Line** (this is a long-distance call for most customers):

Telephone: 314-801-0800
Telephone (Toll Free): 1-866-272-6272

Note: Our peak calling times are weekdays between 10:00 am CST and 3:00 pm CST. Staff is available to take your call as early as 7:00 am and as late as 5:00 pm cst.

Special Note on Calling by Phone: If you have already submitted a request and need to know its status you may speak to a Customer Service Representative. Staff is available to take your call as early as 7:00 am CST and as late as 5:00 pm CST. Our peak calling times are weekdays between 10:00 am CST and 3:00 pm CST:

* Please see our Privacy Statement

National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)

Source: https://www.usa.gov/agencies/national-archives-and-records-administration

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) preserves U.S. government records, manages the Presidential Libraries system, and publishes laws, regulations, Presidential, and other public documents.

Website

National Archives and Records Administration

Contact

Contact the National Archives and Records Administration

Toll-free number

1-86-NARA-NARA (1-866-272-6272)

TTY

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Find an office near you

National Archives facilities by state

Main address

8601 Adelphi Rd.

College Park, MD 20740-6001